

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O P 151600Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

S E C R E T AMMAN 6155

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, JO, LE

SUBJ: CALL BY LEBANESE AMBASSADOR

1. LEBANESE AMBASSADOR ABEDL-RAHMAN SOLH CALLED ON ME OCTOBER 14 ON A NOTE OF SUME URGENCY. PREVIOUSLY WE HAVE FROM TIME TO TIME DISCUSSED DEVELOPMENTS IN JORDAN AND LEBANON. NEVERTHELESS HE ASKED TO SEE ME ON EMBASSY HOLIDAY.

2. WHAT DEVELOPED WAS A DISCUSSION OF SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS SOLH HAS HAD WITH KING HUSSEIN. (WE HAVE HAD REPORTS FROM KING OF HIS CONCERNS ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON). SOLH, WHO HAS A TENDENCY TOWARD CONFUSED AND ILLOGICAL EXPOSITION, NEVERTHELESS SAID THAT HE RECENTLY HAD BEEN CALLED IN BY HUSSEIN AFTER HAVING TRIED NUMEROUS TIMES TO SEE HIM. KING THAN TREATED HIM TO ONE-HOUR MONOLOGUE ON HIS CONCERNS ABOUT LEBANON. BASIC THEME WAS THAT SOVIETS WERE BEHIND SYRIA AND INDEED DEEPLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MUCH OF SYRIA'S PRESENT MISGUIDED POLICY, PARTICULARLY TOWARD LEBANON. SYRIAN INFLUENCE WAS INCREASING IN MANY LEBANESE QUARTERS AND KING WAS DEEPLY DISTURBED ABOUT POTENTIAL DISAPPEARANCE OF AN INDEPENDENT AND FRIENDLY LEBANON FROM THE SCENE.

3. KING OFFERED HIS HELP IN ANY WAY THAT WOULD BE USEFUL

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TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND THOUGHT THAT JORDANIAN ARMY MIGHT

AT SOME POINT BE VALUABLE TO LEBANESE IN TRAINING OR OTHER CAPACITY. HE ASKED AMBASSADOR SOLH TO CONVEY THESE VIEWS TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE.

4. SOLH, WHO IS A SON OF RIAD, LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER IN 1950S BUT I GATHER NO GREAT FRIEND OF RECENT PM TAKADDIN SOLH, SOUGHT INTERVIEW LAST WEEK WITH FRANGIE AND DELIVERED KING'S MESSAGE. FRANGIE'S REACTION WAS, AS SOLH DESCRIBED IT, RATHER DEFINITELY ONE OF CONFUSION. SOLH, WHO IS ALSO NOT AN ADMIRER OF FRANGIE-- ALTHOUGH HE ADDS HE IS AN HONEST MAN -- SAYS FRANGIE'S PRESENT PREOCCUPATION IS TO INSURE A GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF FRANGIE SUPPORTERS IN IT TO ALLOW HIM TO SURVIVE TO 1976 ELECTIONS. SOLH ADDED THAT FRANGIE PROVIDED A VERY GENERAL RESPONSE -- THAT LEBANON WOULD BE PLEASED WITH ANYTHING WHICH KING COULD DO. HE SUGGESTED NO SPECIFICS INDEED AVOIDED THEM AND MADE NO DIRECT INVITATION FOR JORDANIAN AID.

5. AMBASSADOR SOLH THEN WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY A STRONG AND CONTINUING FRIEND OF US. HE AND A NUMBER OF HIS FRIENDS IN BEIRUT WOULD BE PREPARED TO COOPERATE IN ANY "PLAN" WHICH US HAD TO ASSIST FRIENDLY FORCES IN LEBANON TO MAINTAIN IT FREE FROM SOVIET AND OTHER MALEVOLENT INFLUENCES. AMONG THESE INFLUENCES HE CHARACTERIZED AS BEING MOST DANGEROUS JUMBLATT, THE SHIITE IMAM AS SADR, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER ELEMENTS ASSOCIATED OR POTENTIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THEM. HE LINKED THE SHIITE IMAM WITH THE SYRIAN ALOWITES, A PARTICULARLY POWERFUL FORCE FOR ASAD GIVEN THEIR COMMON RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS.

6. I FENDED OFF SOLH ON ANY US "PLANS" AND HELP, AND I AM AFRAID, AFTER A NUMBER OF LEADING SUGGESTIONS ON HIS PART THAT WERE DIFFICULT TO IGNORE, SAID I WOULD PASS ON HIS STORY TO AMBASSADOR GODLEY IN CASE HE WISHED TO TALK FURTHER. I SAID MY EXTREMELY LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT LEBANESE SCENE AS WELL AS STRONG DISINCLINATION TO INVOLVE MYSELF IN LEBANESE QUESTIONS AT THIS DISTANCE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO GIVE HIM ANY SUGGESTIONS OR ADVICE.

7. HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC AS TO WHAT FRIENDS OF HIS IN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND ON THE POLITICAL SCENE HE WAS REALLY  
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TALKING ABOUT AND WHAT THEIR POTENTIAL WAS AND I DEFERRED ASKING HIM FURTHER QUESTIONS TO AVOID LEADING HIM TO BELIEVE THERE WAS ANY INTEREST ON MY PART IN HIS SUGGESTIONS OR OFFER TO BE OF HELP.

8. COMMENT: SOLH HAS APPEARED TO BE A FUND OF KNOWLEDGE ON LEBANESE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. HE CLAIMS LONG PAST CONNECTIONS WITH THE US IN LEBANON OVER THE YEARS. AT BARE

MINIMUM, I BELIEVE HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH AMBASSADOR  
GODLEY, AND IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO DO SO, I WOULD RECOMMEND A  
TALK WITH HIM, IF ONLY TO DISCOVER WHAT HE REALLY HAS IN  
MIND. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE HAS NOT A REPUTATION AS BEING  
A PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE AMBASSADOR HERE, SPENDING AS HE  
DOES SO MUCH TIME IN BEIRUT. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEEK  
MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR DOGLDY DURING THE EID FESTIVITIES  
AND RETURNED LAST NIGHT TO BEIRUT FROM JORDAN AFTER A  
FURTHER INTERVIEW WITH KING HUSSEIN. I EXPECT HE WILL REPORT  
THE RESULTS OF THIS TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE VERY SHORTLY. WOULD BE  
GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD SEE HIM AND FOR ANY REACTION TO  
CONVERSATION YOU CAN PASS ON.  
PICKERING

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